

Appl. No. 10/672,105
Amdt. dated January 3, 2007
Reply to Office Action mailed July 5, 2006

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings includes changes to Figures 1 and 3A. These sheets replace the original sheets containing Figures 1, 2, 3A and 3B. In Figures 1 and 3A, element "F" has been added to indicate an upper/lower door frame.

Attachment: Replacement Drawing Sheets

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 are pending. Claim 1 has been amended herein. As set forth more fully below, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejections of the claims are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,040,806 ("Merrill"). It is the Examiner's position and claims 1 and 3 are clearly anticipated by Merrill, specifically with reference to "stopper 52."

At column for lines 1 – 15 of Merrill, the effect of the molding strips 52 on the coplanar relationship of the panels is described as follows:

"FIG. 6 illustrates adjacent panels 14 in their extended condition illustrating operative functioning of the moulding strips 52 in controlling the extent to which the adjacent panels 14 are moved toward coplanar relation. The outer tapered surfaces of adjacent moulding strips 52 are brought into engagement with one another to limit the extent of movement of adjacent panels 14 toward coplanar relation. In this respect, adjacent interconnected panels are limited in their degree of movement toward mutual coplanar relation to the extent illustrated in FIG. 2 wherein the door structure 10 is shown in its fully extended condition. The hinge connections 19 are alternately oppositely directed and reversed in position at opposite edges of each of the panels to cause the panels to fold back and forth against each other in their contracted positions." (Emphasis added)

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite a spread confining means which restricts the spread range of adjacent doors to between 30° and 60°. The advantages of this configuration are described at page 14, lines 3-15 of the specification of the instant invention. Specifically, the rigidity of the door and the effect of the spread are simultaneously strengthen. When the spread range is limited to between 30° and 60° without a slant to one side.

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This amendment to claim 1 is in contrast to Merrill, wherein the molding strips 52 do not disclose a means of confining the spread range of the doors to between 30° and 60°. Applicants therefore submit that claim 1, as amended, is not anticipated by Merrill and respectfully request the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 3,348,628 ("Dixon") in view of Merrill. Similar to Merrill above, Dixon does not teach a spread confining means to restrict the spread of the adjacent doors to between 30° and 60° and therefore does not disclose the rigidity and strengthening means that stem from this configuration. Therefore, Applicants submit that the combination of Dixon and Merrill do not teach every element of claim 4 as amended, and respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Based upon the foregoing, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and such disposition is respectfully requested. In the event that a telephone conversation would further prosecution and/or expedite allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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